

HOW MUCH THE MIND CAUSES  
AND CURES DISEASE

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# How the Mind Causes And Cures Disease

Outside of surgical cases, contagious diseases, and accidents, nine tenths of the people who come to a doctor are suffering from functional disturbances which usually have a mental origin and can be cured by mental methods

By William S. Sadler, M. D.

LET ME say, at the very beginning, that I am a "regular" physician and surgeon. I use medicine, physical remedies, and surgery in the treatment of disease. I belong to no "mental healing" cult of any description. And yet—I admit that mind cures are possible, and even common.

I will go even further than that. In certain cases, a mind cure is the *only* thing that will restore the patient to health. But I want to state, with equal emphasis, that there are other cases where a mind cure is absolutely impossible.

The general rule can be put in two sentences: Any disease that can be *caused* by the mind, can be *cured* by the mind. And if a disease *has* been caused by the mind, that is the way it *must* be cured.

There are literally millions of people who are in crying need of a mind cure; and my purpose in these articles is to help them to get it, for I have a sincere sympathy for many of these sufferers.

First, you will want to know what *kind* of diseases can be caused, and cured, by the mind; and the moment I begin to discuss that point I must talk of two extraordinary powers—*fear* and *faith*; fear as a cause of disease, and faith as a cure.

By fear, I mean doubt, distrust, anxiety, indecision, and all the rest of the debilitating and paralyzing cousins. By faith, I mean the opposite states of mind: optimism, courage, confidence, determination.

Later I will describe the astonishing effect the mind has on the body, an effect which enables it both to cause and to cure certain diseases. But first I want to explain that there are *two classes* of disease. We medical men call them "organic" and "functional."

In the case of an organic disease, an actual change has taken place in the body structure; something has happened to the tissues. Examples of organic disease are cancer, tuberculosis, ulcer, and Bright's disease.

I doubt whether a mental state alone, unless very long continued, could produce these actual physical changes; and neither do I believe that they can be cured by the mind alone.

But with the functional diseases, it is a different story. Most nervous, digestive, and circulatory disorders are purely functional. The brain, the stomach, and the heart may be in perfect condition, as re-

functional disturbances. The vast majority of them can be relieved by some kind of mind cure.

If a mental state has made you sick, anything that will remove that mental state can cure you. It makes no difference whether it is a philosophy, a religion, a nostrum, or a new method of treatment. If it is something you have *faith* in, it will do the trick, even if in itself it is a lie. It is your faith that works the miracle, not the thing to which you happen to *pin* your faith.

## It's Easy to Fool the Body

"THE mind," says Doctor Sadler, "can cause the sensation of pain, and mind can relieve pain. This has been proved by injecting distilled water into the arm of a suffering patient. He thought it was morphine—and the pain was promptly relieved. This experiment has been made many times with complete success. In one case, I did this when the patient, a young woman, was begging for morphine. Two minutes after I had injected plain boiled water into her arm she was sleeping peacefully."

gards their structure, but they do not *function* properly. And the cause of this is often found to be simply and solely the person's state of mind.

Examples of functional disease are many kinds of headache, so-called nervous indigestion, certain unpleasant heart symptoms, numbness, a feeling of creeping and crawling in various parts of the body, an indescribable sense of weakness and fatigue, or even apparent paralysis of some part of the body. Many of these nervous disorders are also associated with disturbances in the so-called ductless-gland system of the body.

THE mind can cause any or all of these functional diseases—and it can also cure them. It is my belief that, outside of surgical cases, contagious diseases, and accidents, *nine tenths* of the people who come to the physician, seeking relief from their ailments, are suffering only from

Of course there are many people who *claim* to have been cured of organic disease by mental treatment only. There are several possible explanations: In most of these cases there was *no* organic disease; it was a mistaken diagnosis. But if the disease actually was present, then Nature must receive the credit for the cure.

We physicians know that Nature is often the real healer of our patients. We are her co-workers. Often she doesn't need us at all. Like God, she moves in a mysterious way her wonders to perform. In cancer cases, for example, there is a certain percentage of what are known as "spontaneous" recoveries. The patient gets well; and the physician knows that he did not perform the cure.

And so, in these alleged mind cures of organic disease, *if* the disease actually was present, Nature was the real healer. The mental attitude of the patient was favorable; to that extent it helped, just





It seems almost incredible that the prickly pear cactus in bloom (left) and the spray of mountain laurel (right) are made of glass. Botanically they are correct in every detail. The spines of the cactus are tiny glass rods and, like the pistils of the bloom, were made, one by one, with infinite patience and skill. The colors are lifelike, and even the minute plant hairs—a thousand tiny glass spikes to the square inch—have been faithfully reproduced on the stems and under the leaves. These marvelous flowers are the work of two Bohemian glass artists. Thirty-six hundred other floral specimens are in the Ware collection at Harvard University.



"In the old days, spun glass was used to make curls for the courtiers in France. Woolly-looking toy animals have also been made of it; but they are more suited for the curio cabinet than for children to play with. To-day, the two chief uses for spun glass are as a filter in the manufacture of chemicals and as insulation against heat and cold.

"You probably have some of this glass wool in your own home—between the walls of your refrigerator, where you'd never think of looking for it. Many thousands of tons of it are used in the United States every year.

"It makes a wonderful insulating substance, because *ninety per cent* of the space taken up by a pound of glass wool is *air space*! The wool itself is very light in proportion to the space it occupies; and this lightness of weight means that when an American battleship, 460 feet long, is insulated with glass wool instead of ordinary insulating materials the saving in weight is 380 tons! That

would be the weight of 4,500 persons!

"Spun glass is also made into ink erasers of the kind commonly used by architects and draftsmen. The fibers, fastened in a metal band, remove ink traces neatly by scratching off minute particles of paper."

DOCTOR SILVERMAN next directed my attention to the disk of glass, an inch thick and nine inches in diameter. Apparently it had experienced some kind of shock which had caused a dent in the center. From this dent there was a radiation of fine, hairlike lines.

"That is what we call 'transparent steel,'" observed the chemist. "You needn't be afraid of breaking it! At a distance of ten feet, you couldn't shoot a .45 caliber steel-encased bullet from an army automatic pistol through that glass. The dent and starlike radiation you see there were made by just such a bullet. I could show you 'transparent steel,' two inches thick, that will stop a 30.30 armor-piercing rifle bullet!

"Bank robbers have a grudge against this bullet-proof glass," laughed Doctor Silverman. "When a bank cashier stands behind ordinary glass, he knows he is an easy mark; but when he is behind transparent steel, he is safe from the ordinary weapon bandits carry. The money cages of some of the most prominent banks in the United States are made of this bullet-proof glass. It is used also in the windows of armored express automobiles and in the armored money cars of Federal Reserve Banks.

"This particular sample consists of three layers of plate glass. There is no wire mesh. The glass is perfectly clear and transparent. It is made by putting a plastic substance, like celluloid, between the three sheets of glass and welding them together under high temperature and tremendous pressure.

"Since it is non-smashable, this kind of glass, in varying (Continued on page 179)



Glass wool (above) is made by spinning a thread of molten glass. A pound of ordinary window glass can be spun into a thread finer than silk and over six hundred miles long. It is used principally for insulation and as a chemical filter. Thousands of tons of it are produced annually in the United States



Modern glass has almost perfect transparency. The watch (right) was photographed through a block of flint optical glass four inches thick and weighing thirteen pounds

PHOTO FROM  
PHOTOGRAPHIC LABORATORY,  
BUREAU OF STANDARDS, WASHINGTON, D.C.



as it helps the physician to treat any kind of disease.

This brings me to that marvelously interesting subject, *the effect of the mind on the body*. It is here that we find the explanation of three fourths of our physical suffering; and here is the secret of *all* mind cures.

THE human body is composed of about twenty-six trillions of little cells, all of them inter-related. They are affected by two influences, two sets of "messages." One set is carried by the circulation. They are the "chemical messages," the so-called "hormones" of the ductless and other glands. In this way any one part of the body is able to influence any and all other parts.

The other set is composed of "mental messages," which reach the cells by way of the nervous system. All messages from the higher centers of your brain must pass through the various ganglia of the sympathetic nerve system before reaching the vital organs. These ganglia are relay stations, where the messages are "censored." So the definition of the "mind" must be enlarged to include the sympathetic nervous system.

In this larger sense, the mind is a mysterious but marvelous power. It presides not only over the realm of thought but also over the *vital physical functions*. It cannot change the structure of any organ of the body; but it can affect the *working* of that organ. It can help it, or it can interfere with it.

Now, our emotions—our mental "feelings"—send a constant stream of nerve impulses, or messages, to various parts of the body. And it is an indisputable fact that those which are sent out by emotions of happiness, courage, and confidence help the vital organs to function easily and efficiently. Those sent out by emotions of pessimism, doubt, and fear have the opposite effect.

It has been proved beyond question that faith—using the word in the broad sense I explained before—promotes normal circulation, restful sleep, good respiration and digestion. Fear causes the reverse of these conditions.

Please remember that these statements are scientifically true; that these mental messages are physical realities. You freely admit that if you take a chemical poison you will suffer the effects of it. What I want you to realize is that a *mental* poison, in the form of thought, also has a disastrous effect. And also, just as there are antidotes for chemical poisons, so there are antidotes for mental ones. Fear, doubt, distrust, and discouragement are mental poisons. Faith, confidence, trust, and courage are their antidotes.

I remember one patient who thought he was paralyzed. When he came to the clinic, he apparently never had seen a clinical thermometer until I put one into his mouth to take his temperature. I had to leave him for a while, and on my return found that he supposed this was a new kind of treatment which, he assured me, made him feel better.

As my examination showed that his paralysis was merely imaginary, I allowed him to go on thinking that the thermometer "treatment" helped him. Every day for two weeks I had him come to the office and hold a thermometer under his



PHOTO BY MATZENE, CHICAGO

Dr. William S. Sadler was for many years a professor at the Post-Graduate Medical School of Chicago, and is now senior attending surgeon to one of Chicago's larger hospitals. He is a widely known lecturer and writer on health subjects. Some of his books are the "Science of Living," "The Physiology of Faith and Fear," "Worry and Nervousness," "Race Decadence," and "The Mother and Her Child." Doctor Sadler, a native of Indiana, is a member of the leading medical and surgical organizations of the United States, and is an outstanding figure among medical men who are carrying the gospel of health to the public

tongue for one hour. Unaided by any other treatment, this cured him! He had thought he was paralyzed—he now thought he was being cured. That was all there was to it.

I do not claim that all pain can be relieved by the mind; but I suggest that all pain can be made worse by mental influence. Have you ever gone to the theatre when suffering with a headache? If so, you know that *during the acts* you were not conscious of your headache; but in the intermissions, when your mind reverted to yourself, the pain was almost unbearable.

YOUR mental state affects all your senses. If it is cheerful and confident, it sharpens the perceptions of taste and of smell, renders the hearing acute, and makes speech fluent and easy. In short, it causes our reactions to be normal, and so prevents and relieves functional disorders.

Fear, doubt, and discouragement blunt and distort the sensations, sometimes

even to the extent of causing deafness, hallucinations, paralysis. Of course these people are *not* deaf, blind, or paralyzed. Their ears, eyes, and muscles are all right—but they don't know it.

Not long ago, I had one of these cases, a workman who had lost the sight of one eye when a small piece of steel was blown into it. The steel was removed; but the man could not see with that eye, although several expert oculists could find nothing wrong with it.

It was evidently a case of "hysterical blindness"—a figment of the man's imagination. Therefore, to go back to my rule that what is caused by the mind can be cured by the mind, I set to work to relieve him by that method.

I told him of a powerful magnet that could draw a piece of steel out of the eye from half way across the room. You see, this was what he claimed—that they hadn't got all the steel out. I made elaborate preparations, calculated to *prepare his mind*. Three times a day I had him come to (Continued on page 72)





# Raised a Romeo

The story of a riotous rise to fame

By Robert Bachman

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TONY SARG

THEY called him Roughhouse Rooney, the Fighting Fireman, which was a good title while it lasted, which it didn't, thereby proving once more that, no matter how sick a guy looks, it don't do to write his funeral notice till he's dead.

For two years after Rooney ships in the navy, he goes through the heavy-weights like a Minnesota lumberjack through a winter's pay, and then one day it's discovered that if you touch him anywhere near the stomach and all, he goes wild and furious and blows away up in the air and collects the loser's end of the purse.

As soon as this news item gets out on him every second-rater in the fleet takes a soft pencil and writes "Roughhouse" down on the bill of fare along with the cream pie.

The ship's surgeon says Rooney was suffering from a complexion of the gastric region which made him distemperamental. He says a horse or something must have kicked him years ago, and now it hurts his sikology to be irritated in that one special spot. But lissen, that wasn't the worst about Roughhouse. The thing that used to open my stable was that he had a lavender streak in him. You know what I mean? Not yellow, but lavender. He could think of only three things—girls, girls, and girls. He was one of these queer birds who was born a fighter, but raised a Romeo.

How I come to know so much about him was that I was his manager, and if ever two human beings get wise to someone—it's the wife and the manager.

It was July. The U. S. S. "Tulsa" was lying off Vera Cruz, and Roughhouse had just lost his third straight fight through that sikology of his and we was all down

in the mouth, with nothing to do but go ashore and spend a lot of good silver dollars for bad drinks at the Hotel Dili-gencia.

WELL, one hot day I hit the beach and follow a straight course to the hotel, when who should I see sitting there ahead of me but Roughhouse, making distress signals to a sea-going waiter. His face was long enough to eat oats from the bottom of a feed bag.

"You left the ship kinder early," I says. "What's the trouble?"

"Well, Sparks, you know my weakness," he says.

In the navy they always call you some kind of a name to tip off to a waiting world what your job is, like Chips, the carpenter; Pills, the pharmacist; Spuds, the commissary steward; and Sparks, the electrician, which was me.

"I know you got a tissue-paper stomach," I says.

"Oh, it ain't that," he growls. "You know how I am. The sun don't rise, the moon don't set, and the stars don't twinkle for me unless I'm in love. That's me—love! In the old U. S. love was sweet and soothing, out in China and the Philip-pines it was romantic and full of adventure, but down here, Sparks, in the middle of July with one of those Mexican beauties like Rafaella Madero! Oh, spray the violets over me and shimmy the feather fans!"

"Who is this Rafaella Madero?" I says.

"Rafaella is the daughter of old man Madero, the big boss of all the bull fights down here," he says; "and there is a Spig by the name of Felipe Gonzales on the job every night at Rafaella's house making me look like a bad case of malaria."

"Why, say," I says, "he ain't the bobo

what pilots vegetables out to the ship every morning?"

"He's the champion amateur bull fighter of Vera Cruz, that's what he is," says Roughhouse. "It's true that onst in a while on week days he chaperons a boat-load of spuds out to the 'Tulsa,' but on Sunday he gets himself all draped around with a Carmen make-up and beats it down to the arena, where he settles a few private arguments with the local live stock. That's how he gets such a big pull with old man Madero, who wants a bull fighter in the family. They call them torriders down here."

"Vegetables one day, beef the next. Life to him must be one long Irish stew," I says. "What have you done about it so far?"

"What can I do? Up home making good with a Jane was like reading jokes out of a comic paper, but down here I'm as useless as a cup of spilled coffee. I used to think I knew something about making love, but it's looking more complicated now than the inside of a cuckoo clock."

"LOVE," I says with vigor, trying to let a ray of sunshine into the prison of his mind, "is like lemon meringue pie—you either know how to make it or you don't. And it ain't all brains, either. I onst knew a guy so wise he could take an adding machine apart and put it together again, and what happened to him? Why, his girl ran off and married a soda-water jerker from Columbus, Ohio."

"I know it ain't brains," says Rough-ouse, making me wonder how he found out. "Down here it's bull fighting. No one can win Rafaella Madero unless he's a better bull fighter than Felipe Gon-zales, and look at me! I can rustle a steer



# How the Mind Causes and Cures Disease

(Continued from page 41)

the office, and we dropped a little boric acid into his eye. There happened to be an electrician working around the place; and the patient was given to understand that this was in connection with installing the wonderful magnet that was to restore his sight.

At the end of five days, he was told that everything was ready. Meanwhile, I had borrowed a magnet for the occasion. I carefully placed the patient, and explained that when he saw some red lights go on, across the room, the magnet would be working, and his sight would be instantly restored.

That is exactly what happened. When the red lights flashed on, he exclaimed, "Thank God! I can see!"

We had bandaged the other eye, so that he would know he was cured. And of course the magnet was not connected with the electrical circuit at all. It was a pure case of building up his expectation and his faith. Anything else that would have made him *believe* he was going to be cured would have done just as well.

ONE of the commonest examples of the mind's effect on the body is the heart action. It is a well-known fact that the heart centers can be temporarily and completely paralyzed by fear. There are numerous cases on record of apparently healthy persons being actually frightened to death.

The heart action can be altered by merely thinking about it. Any emotional agitation almost immediately produces a thumping of the heart. Persistent worry is usually accompanied by increased blood pressure. And these symptoms, mind you, occur when the heart and the arteries are perfectly normal.

An ex-convict came to the clinic one day complaining of insomnia and loss of appetite. He had a blood pressure of 190, although a careful examination showed no physical condition to account for it. This continued during two weeks. We found that he was afraid that he might be arrested, on the ground of "once a criminal, always a criminal." When he was promised that he would be safe from arrest, his blood pressure soon went down to 150, and remained there.

A very nervous man who had a blood pressure of 170 joined a religious order that does not believe in the use of medicine; his blood pressure went down to 145 when he stopped worrying about his health. A jilted lover also had a pressure of 170; it was reduced to 135 when he became reconciled with his sweetheart. A business man in financial straits had a pressure of 180; it fell to 150 after his affairs took a turn for the better.

Recently it has been discovered that abnormal mental states can, in a measure, actually deteriorate the blood by affecting the general health. In particular, mental depression causes sluggish circulation and, very often, chronic liver stagnation. This brings about the destruction of large numbers of red blood corpuscles.

Faith favors normal blood and increases the resistance to disease. Fear

promotes anemia, decreases the resistance, and predisposes to infection.

The mind affects also the action of the skin. Anxiety, worry, and fear, by their influence through the nervous system, cause the small capillaries to contract; this not only produces pallor of the skin, but forces the blood into the internal organs; and so, because of insufficient skin circulation, the person is liable to many circulatory and digestive disturbances.

THE mental state alone can change the pulse from regular and strong to irregular and weak. Just as a joke, some medical students once bandaged the eyes of a fellow student and pretended to open a vein in his arm. A small stream of water was then allowed to trickle over his arm and to fall into a bowl. The student, believing this water to be his own blood, turned deathly pale and fainted.

I was summoned by telephone to the hospital one day to see a patient who recently had undergone an operation. She had suddenly developed a very weak pulse and seemed to be on the verge of collapse. Of course, even before starting for the hospital, I had ordered certain things to be done for her; but as the distance was very short I arrived before any of these directions could be carried out.

As I was trying to feel her pulse, the patient whispered, "Doctor, am I dying?" Now, I could not then feel any pulse at the wrist; but with all the courage and optimism I could command, I replied, "Certainly not! You'll be all right in a jiffy!"

Within *ten seconds* after she heard me speak these words of reassurance, the pulse could be felt at the wrist, the color began to return to her face, and thirty minutes later she was in a fairly normal condition. She had *thought* she was dying; and her fear had brought her, to all appearances, dangerously near to death's door. It is difficult to explain just what happens in a case of that kind; but it is *not* difficult to recognize the value of courage, hope, and confidence.

Next let me take the effect of the mind on the respiratory function. Good cheer and optimism increase the depth of breathing, and therefore the relative oxygen intake—and oxygen, as you know, is necessary to life. Courageous and confident people usually have a lung capacity decidedly above the average. Victims of worry and anxiety almost invariably suffer from depression of the chest as well as depression of spirits; and this has an important bearing on health, for a well-developed chest is a great safeguard against tuberculosis.

There is such a thing as a psychic cough. I was once called to see a man who had been coughing continuously for hours and was almost prostrated with exhaustion. While I was examining him a neighbor's child was run over by an automobile; and in the excitement which followed my patient entirely forgot to cough! Half an hour later he remembered—and at once began to cough frantically. However, he had to admit that he had been "cured" for half an hour; so he summoned

his will power, began to control the impulse to cough, and made a speedy recovery.

I know a woman who, for three years, had suffered with a persistent cough. She joined a religious cult which didn't believe in coughs, and she quickly got over hers. Faith worked the cure.

The muscles reflect the mental balance, or the lack of it. Nervous people are always at high tension. They don't know the blessings of muscular relaxation, and that is disastrous to the general health. This mental tension causes what we call "motor obsessions;" twiddling the thumbs, drumming on the table or the arm of a chair, keeping the foot in motion when the knees are crossed, and so on.

I remember a woman who came to the clinic one day to inquire about her husband. All the time she was talking she kept beating a tattoo on the table with her fingers. She explained that her husband, after going to bed at night, would suddenly begin to wriggle his toes and would keep this up until he went to sleep. "What ails him?" she demanded.

"Well, madam," I said, "he has the same disease you have, the fidgets! On'y, he has it in his feet, and you have it in your fingers."

Phases of muscular nervousness keep up until the person becomes a victim of chronic muscular rigidity. Upon retiring at night, instead of relaxing, they clench the hands, draw up the legs, and stiffen the neck. When they awaken in the morning, they complain of feeling more tired than when they went to bed. No wonder! They have worked hard all night.

Observe yourself when you go to bed. More than likely you will find that you do not relax as a baby does, but are more or less tense. Learn to let go! As I often say to my nervous patients, "Learn to live on your *virtu*als and not on your *vital*s." When you go out in your automobile, let the motor do the work. A lot of people pay twenty cents a gallon for gasoline—and then help to pull the machine all over the country.

A PERSON'S state of mind has a vast effect on the amount of muscular work he can perform in a given time. I once knew a man who had not done a good day's work in three years. He believed he was suffering from some insidious and incurable disease; and he became weaker and weaker, finally taking to his bed. At last there fell into his hands a book which contained the story of a case much like his own. The patient described in the book had cured himself by deep breathing, focusing his mind on some distant object, and repeating the words, "I can, I will, I am doing it now."

The bedridden man did likewise. Within a few days he was back at work, and he has been an enthusiast for that particular brand of mind cure ever since. And who can blame him? Of course anything else would have done just as well—if his mind had accepted it and *believed* it would cure him.

The mental state has a very decided effect on the action of the secretory glands.



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